

Message Text

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S E C R E T STATE 103856 TOSEC 110351

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FOL REPEAT PORT OF SPAIN 1042 SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO BRIDGE-
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S E C R E T PORT OF SPAIN 1042

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DEPT FOR ARA AND S/S ONLY

EMBASSIES FOR AMBASSADORS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP (KISSINGER, HENRY A.), TD

SUBJECT: PROPOSED VISIT BY THE SECRETARY TO TRINIDAD
AND TOBAGO

REF: A) STATE 093414, B) PORT OF SPAIN 0985, C) FAY/
RICH TELECON 4/23

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SUMMARY:TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO PRIME MINISTER WILLIAMS JUDGES VISIT BY SECRETARY IN MID-JUNE UNFORTUNATELY UNFEASIBLE DUE TO IMMINENT CONJUNCTION OF NATIONAL ELECTIONS IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO. WILLIAMS REGRETS TIMING WILL PREVENT USEFUL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS AND LONG-AWAITED VISIT BY SECRETARY AT THIS TIME AND EXPRESSES HOPE THAT A FUTURE VISIT WILL BE POSSIBLE. END SUMMARY

1. IN RESPONSE TO AUTHORIZATION IN REF (C), I CONTACTED PRIME MINISTER DR. ERIC WILLIAMS BY PHONE SATURDAY MORNING, APR 24, TO REQUEST AN APPOINTMENT TO MEET WITH HIM. AS IS MY USUAL CUSTOM, I NOTED BRIEFLY THE SUBJECT OF MY PROPOSED CALL, SIMPLY IN THIS INSTANCE REFERRING TO HIS INVITATION CONVEYED IN WASHINGTON IN FEBRUARY 1975.

2. PRIME MINISTER RECEIVED ME THIS MORNING (APRIL 27) FOR A PRIVATE DISCUSSION WITH NO AIDES PRESENT. HE INFORMED ME THAT HE HAD IMMEDIATELY INFERRED THE IMPLICATION OF MY CALL AND HAD DISCUSSED A POTENTIAL VISIT BY THE SECRETARY WITH HIS CLOSEST ADVISORS: THE GOVERNOR GENERAL, SIR ELLIS CLARKE; MINISTER ERROL MAHABIR; AND MINISTER FRANCIS PREVATT (CHAIRMAN OF THE RULING PARTY). THEY HAD ALL BEEN CONCERNED IN RELATION TO THE TIMING OF THE FORTHCOMING NATIONAL ELECTION IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO, AND FELT THAT IF THE VISIT WERE IN IMMINENT RELATION TO THE ELECTION THE NEGATIVE EXPLOITATION OF THE VISIT BY THE OPPOSITION AND BY THOSE WHO WOULD WISH TO EMBARRASS THE SECRETARY OR THE PRIME MINISTER WOULD CAST IT IN AN UNFORTUNATE LIGHT.

3. WE THEN PROCEEDED TO DISCUSS THE SECRETARY'S VISITS TO THE HEMISPHERE IN GREATER DETAIL AND I INFORMED WILLIAMS OF THE PROSPECTIVE TIMING OF A STOP IN TRINIDAD JUNE 13-14 AFTE THE OAS GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN SANTIAGO. THE PRIME MINISGER REGRETFULLY CONCLUDED THAT IT WOULD SIMPLY BE INOPPORTUNE FOR THE SECRETARY TO VISIT TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO IN MID-JUNE SINCE IT WOULD FALL EITHER RIGHT AT ELECTION TIME OR

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IN THE MIDST OF THE BRIEF PERIOD OF THE OFFICIAL CAMPAIGN. HE HOPED THAT THE SECRETARY WOULD UNDERSTAND AND THAT THERE WOULD BE ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY ON WHICH HE MIGHT BE ABLE TO VISIT THE CARIBBEAN AND ACCEPT THE PRIME MINISTER'S INVITATION TO COME TO TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO.

4. WILLIAMS WAS AWARE THAT IN THE CONTEXT OF THE BROAD ITINERARY IN THE HEMISPHERE ENCOMPASSED BY THE

COMBINATION OF THE SECRETARY'S TRIPS IN FEBRUARY AND JUNE, THE OMISSION OF THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING CARIBBEAN AND OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO IN PARTICULAR WOULD BE NOTED AND RAISE QUESTIONS. I ASKED FOR HIS ADVICE ON HOW THE USG MIGHT RESPOND TO SUCH QUESTIONS WHEN THEY AROSE, AND WHAT ADVICE HE MIGHT HAVE AS TO ANOTHER APPROPRIATE STOP THE SECRETARY MIGHT MAKE.

5. THE PRIME MINISTER PREFERS THAT WE NOT ACKNOWLEDGE DIRECT DISCUSSION OF A POTENTIAL VISIT, OR THAT THE HAD ADVISED AGAINST THE SAME. HE SUGGESTS THAT IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS THE SECRETARY NOTE THAT OUR TWO GOVERNMENTS ARE IN CONSTANT COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION, AND THAT THE ABSENCE OF A VISIT AT THIS TIME IN NO WAY INDICATES A LACK OF RESPECT OR CONSIDERATION FOR THE IMPORTANT STATES OF THE AREA. FURTHERMORE, THE SECRETARY COULD VOLUNTEER HIS AWARENESS OF THE IMMINENT NATIONAL ELECTIONS IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO AND NOTE THAT IN HIS (THE SECRETARY'S) VIEW IT WOULD NOT BE APPROPRIATE EVEN TO GIVE THE APPEARANCE OF INTERFERENCE IN THESE IMPORTANT DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES BY GOING TO PORT OF SPAIN AT THAT TIME.

6. REGARDING OTHER POSSIBLE STOPS IN RECOGNITION OF THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING CARIBBEAN, DR. WILLIAMS NOTED THAT RELATIONS BETWEEN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO AND GUYANA WERE NOT AT THE BEST RIGHT NOW AND THAT HE WAS RESISTING THE LEFTIST IDEOLOGICAL PRESSURES WHICH WERE EMANATING FROM GUYANA. HE THOUGHT IT MIGHT NOT BE PARTICULARLY IN THE U.S. INTERESTS FOR THE SECRETARY TO GO TO GEORGETOWN AT THIS TIME. I ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THERE WERE PROFOUND DIFFERENCES OF OUTLOOK BETWEEN OUR TWO GOVERNMENTS PRESENTLY,
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BUT DID NOT EXPRESS A JUDGMENT ON A VISIT. WILLIAMS INFORMED ME THAT THERE WERE ACTIVE EFFORTS TO IMPROVE THE SCRATCHY RELATIONS BETWEEN BARBADOS AND TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO AT PRESENT, BUT BARBADOS WAS ALSO FACING ELECTIONS THIS YEAR. HE WAS UNSURE WHETHER THE BARBADIAN ELECTION TIMING WOULD IMPINGE ON THE JUNE TRAVELS BY THE SECRETARY. JAMAICA WAS NOT MENTIONED.

7. IN CONCLUSION, HOWEVER, WILLIAMS SUGGESTED THAT PERHAPS THE USG COULD SIMPLY TREAT THE FORTHCOMING TRIP BY THE SECRETARY AS ONE OF A CONTINUING SERIES OF CONSULTATIONS WITHIN THE HEMISPHERE, AND THAT A THIRD TRIP COULD BE PROJECTED AT SOME VAGUE FUTURE TIME DURING WHICH THE SECRETARY WOULD BE ABLE TO CONSULT WITH COLLEAGUES IN THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING CARIBBEAN.

WHILE THIS IS PERHAPS NOT AN IDEAL SOLUTION, IT
OBVIOUSLY APPEALED TO WILLIAMS IN PREFERENCE
TO THE IDEA OF AN ALTERNATE STOP IN PLACE OF TRINIDAD
AND TOBAGO. NEVERTHELESS, I FEEL I LEFT HIM WITH THE
IDEA THAT AN ALTERNATE STOP WAS STILL A POTENTIAL
CHOICE.

8 BEFORE MY DEPARTURE, THE PRIME MINISTER REITERATED
HIS RESPECT FOR THE SECRETARY AND HOPE THAT A FUTURE
VISIT WOULD BE POSSIBLE. HE ALSO CAUTIONED ME THAT
ONLY FOUR PERSONS IN HIS GOVERNMENT (INCLUDING HIMSELF)
WERE AWARE OF THIS DIALOGUE AND THAT THIS DID NOT
RPT NOT INCLUDE THE FOREIGN MINISTER. HE ASKED THAT
USG KNOWLEDGE BE EQUALLY CLOSELY HELD.

9. COMMENT: GREATLY REGRET THAT POTENTIAL CONFLICT
WITH ELECTION LED TO WILLIAMS' JUDGMENT AGAINST VISIT
AT THIS TIME, BUT CONTINUE TO BELIEVE FOR REASONS
SET FORTH REF B THAT A FUTURE VISIT BY THE SECRETARY
WOULD SERVE IMPORTANT USG GOALS IN TRINIDAD AND
TOBAGO AND THE CARIBBEAN.

10. PRIME MINISTER DECLINED TO REVEAL EXACT ELECTION
DATE HE HAS IN MIND FOR TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO, COMMENTING
MERELY THAT THIS WAS MOST SENSITIVE CARD HE HAD TO
PLAY IN LOCAL POLITICS. HE DID NOTE SUGGESTIVELY,
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HOWEVER, THAT TRINIDAD ELECTIONS WERE CUSTOMARILY HELD
ON MONDAYS AND JUNE 14 WAS A MONDAY.
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